ARA #3 PT

482

February 10, 1978

EXCISE

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY John Simms DATE 2.26.81
PORTIONS DENIED AS INDICATED

Dear Mr. Burton:

Thank you for your inquiry of January 3[illegible] on behalf of [redacted] concerning the custody of the child of Mr. and Mrs. Tim Stoen. E BL

All the parties to the case, currently in the courts in Guyana, are American citizens. The parents of the child are on one side and the People's Temple, a California religious organization which also operates in Guyana, on the other.

Our Ambassador and his staff in Guyana have taken an interest in the case, but have emphasized that the interest of the United States is confined to assuring that the matter is fairly and impartially adjudicated in the courts strictly on its merits and without outside interference from any quarter. Consistent with this position, the Embassy has avoided taking any sides in what is essentially a civil dispute between two groups of Americans. Nor has any pressure been brought by the Embassy on the Government of Guyana or its courts, which have yet to rule on the matter, in favor of one side or the other.

We have noted [redacted] comments about the activities of Mr. Stoen while he was visiting Guyana recently. The Department is unaware of any illegal activities being undertaken by Mr. Stoen during his visit to Guyana. E BL

The Honorable
Phillip Burton,
House of Representatives.

I trust this information will assist you in replying to your constituent's letter. If you have any further questions you may direct them to Frank Tumminia, Officer-in-Charge of Guyana, ARA/CAR, Room 3242 or phone (202) 632-3449.

Sincerely,

Douglas J. Bennet, Jr.
Assistant Secretary for
Congressional Relations

Enclosures:

Correspondence returned.

Drafted:ARA/CAR:JGriffith:kc
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Clearances: L/AFA:FArmstrong
CA/SCS:EPowers
ARA:GLister
H:CCutter